WRECKS of the MASSACHUSETTS COAST

by PERCY M CUSHING

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HEROIC BATTLES OF THE LIFE-SAVING SERVICE

IF YOU run through the history of the United States life saving service, you will find that, with the exception of occasional widely separated years, the coast of Massachusetts lays claim to more disasters than any stretch of seaboard within the scope of beach patrol, Long Island and New Jersey not excepted. This is partly on account of the particularly heavy sea-traffic in the vicinity, but it is chiefly due to Cape Cod. It is this crooked finger of land that has beckoned a thousand ships to their doom and which in the hollows of its dunes holds many a tragic story of lives snuffed out in desperate grapple with wave and wind.

The night of Tuesday, March 11, 1902, was wild and storm-strewn. Running up along the coast, the ocean-going tug Sweepstakes was making bad weather with her tow of the two big barges, Wadena and John C. Fitzpatrick. For hours the triple-expansion engines of the tug had been churning her screw in the drift of the heavy head sea and shortly before daylight her captain discovered that she was making no headway. He then decided to lie to and, while feeling about for an anchorabe in the gloom, the barges ran aground on the edge of Shovelful Shoal, off the southern end of Monomoy island, Massachusetts.

When daylight came, the crew of the Monomoy life saving station boarded the barges, but finding it impossible to float them on the flood tide, took their crews ashore.

It was six days later that the disaster occurred. Wreckers sent from Boston were at work on the barges. The tug Peter Smith was on the ground, having replaced the Sweepstakes. On the night of the 16th the weather thickened and a gale swept in from the sea.

The night passed without incident, but early on the morning of the 17th Keeper Eldridge of the Monomoy station received a telephone from the captain of the Smith asking him if everything was all right on the Wadena. This alarmed Eldridge, as he did not know any one had been left on the barge all night. He started at once for the point of the island, three miles away, to look over the situation. The Wadena lay half a mile off shore from the point. She seemed to be riding easily on the bar, but the distress was flying from her rigging. This was a signal Eldridge could not ignore.

It was a terrific pull through the breakers that rolled in across the shoals to the Wadena, but the life-savers accomplished it and put their boat under the lee of the barge at about noon. Keeper Eldridge then directed the men to get into the surfboat and told thm that he would take them ashore. The rail of the big barge was a dozen feet from the water and it was here that the trouble began.

The men on the barge lowered themselves overside on a rope, but as Captain Olsen, a very large man, was halfway down, he lost his hold and fell on the second thwart of the lifeboat, breaking it, and making it impossible for the rowers to use it. In addition, the boat was crowded and the wind, which had been momentarily increasing, was tumbling huge combers into the windward of the barge. It was into this maelstrom of breakers that it was necessary for the handicapped crew of the life-saving station to pull their overloaded boat, and they made a swift and able attempt to accomplish it. At the instant the starboard oarsmen were swinging the head of the life-boat to meet the sea, a giant comber lifted under the quarter and dashed a barrel of water overside. That was the signal for a panic among the reacued men that, before it subsided, cost twelve lives.

The Portuguese wreckers, in a frenzy of fear, stood up in the boat, rocking it to and fro in their endeavors to escape the momentary inrush of water, and though the life-savers fought to force them into the bottom of the craft, this could not be done before the next shouldering wave caught the bow of the boat, swung her broadside and turned her over.

Then ensued a desperate struggle for life. A hundred yards to leeward the breakers were smashing themselves into white foam on the bar. There was just one chance in a million that the boat could be righted before the sea carried her into them. Once she reached them it would be all over. Hampered by the wreckers, the life-savers fought desperately in those few minutes left before the combers should be reached. Three times they righted the boat and strove heroically to bail her, but each time she was again overturned. They were fighting the last tragic fight when they were swept into the smothering foam of the bar.

At that instant seven men, including all from the Wadena, went to face their maker. Five of the hardiest of the life-savers still clung to the capsized boat. They were Keeper Eldridge and Surfmen Ellis, Kendrick, Foye and Rogers. By a superhuman effort Kendrick crawled to the bottom of the overturned craft, but the next sea swept him to join the seven who had gone a moment before. Foye was the next. "Good-by, boys," he gasped as a smother of foam took him. That left Ellis, Rogers and Eldridge the keeper, and Eldridge was fast losing strength.

In a brief lull in the wash of the sea, Ellis crawled to the bottom of the boat. Below him, a foot away, was the keeper, a friend since boyhood. At the risk of his own life, Ellis dropped into the water again, pushed Eldridge up on the bottom with his last strength, and again crawled out himself. The next second a sea washed both off and the keeper, after losing and regaining his grasp on the gunwale several times, disappeared in the maelstrom of water. That left Ellis and Rogers, a big and very strong man.

In this desperate moment Rogers threw his arms around the other surfman's neck in a death grip. For moments, while the sea battered and the foam strangled them, they fought the last grim fight for life, Ellis to break the grip of his frenzied comrade, Rogers to retain it. Suddenly, when it seemed that both must drown, Rogers' strength left him. His arms relaxed; his eyes glazed. "I'm going" he gasped and sank.

A moment later the boat drifted inshore of the outer breakers and for a brief space was in smoother water. Ellis once more crawled out on the bottom and succeeded in pulling the center board out so that he could hold on to it and better maintain his position.

Now, you will remember that at the time of the stranding of the Wadena, the John C. Fitzpatrick, her sister barge had also gone aground. She had gone over the outer bar and was lying between it and the inner breakers. On board her was Capt. Elmer F. Mayo, of Chatham, who was in charge of lightening her. The Fitzpatrick was so far away from the Wadena that Captain Mayo and two other men who were with him, did not see the life-saving boat go out, nor did they have any knowledge of the grim tragedy that was being enacted, until, glancing over the rail, Captain Mayo saw an overturned life-boat with a single man clinging to it.

The capsized boat was some distance from the barge, but Mayo did not hesitate. "I'll get that fellow," he announced coolly.

On the deck of the Fitzpatrick lay a small twelve-foot dory, the only boat aboard, a totally unfit craft for the furious sea that was thundering across the shoals. Kicking off his boots, Mayo and the other men, who begged him not to go as it would be certain death, ran the dory overside.

How the captain of the wrecking crew kept his fragile craft afloat, those who watched him from the Fitzpatrick could nover understand. But he did keep her afloat, and the set of the tide and the gale carried him down toward the capsized life-boat to which Ellis clung now with the last of his ebbing strength.

The life-saver said afterward that he saw a dory thrown over the side of the Fitzpatrick as he drifted near her, but that a moment later the scud and the spindrift were driven so thick and ceaselessly before his eyes that he saw nothing, until suddenly out of the mist a tiny, bobbing boat loomed a dozen feet away. Then the occupant of this boat shot her skilfully alongside the swamped life-boat and the exhausted surfman toppled into her.

Mayo, with the half-conscious life-saver lying limp in the bottom of the dory, had kept his word to his mates on the Fitzpatrick.

Necessarily, the most thrilling stories of the coast-watchers are those in which loss of life is entailed and therefore, in a measure, they are accounts of the failures of the men of the service. But they are stories of noble failures and behind some of them lie tragedies other than those of death.

Perhaps one of the greatest of these is woven about the career of Captain David H. Atkins, until November 30, 1880, keeper of the Peaked Hill Bar station, Cape Cod.

This man had followed the sea from boy-hood, whaling, fishing and coasting. In 1872 he became keeper of the Peaked Hill Bar station.

Then came a wild day in April, 1879, and, as it appears in the chronicles of the department at Washington, "a blot fell across the record of Keeper Atkins."

On this April day the Schooner Sarah J. Fort stranded near Peaked Hill Bar. A terrific sea, coupled with an onshore hurricane and a temperature very low for the time of the year, faced Atkins and his crew as they discovered the schooner and took their apparatus to the beach.

Without hesitation the keeper ordered the surfboat launched, but the sea was so heavy that it was thrown back on the beach. Time and again in the twenty hours of watching and battling with the storm that followed the keeper led his men into the breakers with the boat, but each time they were beaten back, drenched with the winter sea which froze in their clothing, cut and bruised from the buffeting they received.

"And then," says the Service Report of the occurrence, "the last time the launch was attempted the boat was hurled on the shore, her crew were spilled out like matches from the box and the boat was shattered. And Captain Atkins and his men, having eaten nothing since the evening before, spent, faint, heart-sick, had been baffled and had to endure the mortification of seeing a rescue effected by an unworn volunteer crew in a fresh boat brought from the town. The investigation revealed that the men upon the wreck might have been properly landed by the life-lines but for Keeper Atkins' failure to employ the Lyle gun which had recently been furnished the station, through a singular inapprehension of its powers."

It was a bitter pill for the service—the defeat of its men by a volunteer crew.

The night of November 30, 1880, was clear but windy. A heavy gale was piling the surf over the outer bar off the Peaked Hill Bar station. Surfmen Fisher and Kelley left the station at four o'clock to make the eastward and westward patrol. Kelley started from the door first. As he did so he heard the slatting of sails and the banging of blocks above the wind. At the westward he saw the lights of a vessel close inshore.

Shouting to Fisher to give the alarm, he ran down the beach, burning his Coston light. Keeper Atkins glanced at the surf and ordered out the boat. The men dragged it eastward until they were opposite the stranded vessel, which proved to be the sloop C. E. Trumbull of Rockport. The crew manned the boat.

The story of what took place out there under the darkness on Keeper Atkins' last errand of rescue is best told, perhaps, in the personal account of Isaiah Young, one of the survivors. The narrative of this man, in his own words, is taken from the Life Saving Report of 1881. It reads:

"When we launched, the vessel was still some to the eastward. We went off in this manner to take advantage of the tide that was running to the eastward between the bar and the shore. It was low tide. The sea was smooth on the shore, but on the bar, where the vessel lay, it was rough enough to be dangerous.

"We hauled up from the boat until the bow lapped on to her quarter. Keeper Atkins called to them to jump in.

"We landed four persons. This trip could not have consumed more than fifteen minutes.

"When we pulled up again, after being thrown back, Taylor stood in the bow with the line ready to heave. I cautioned Keeper Atkins to have a care for the boom. He said, 'Be ready with the boat-hook. I will look out for the boom.' I was just taking up the hook when a sea came around the stern, threw the stern of the boat more toward the boom as the vessel rolled to leeward and the boom went into the water.

"As the vessel rolled to windward and the boom rose it caught under the cork belt near the stroke rowlock and threw us over, bottom up.

"We rolled the boat over, right side up, and I was the first to get into her. Others got in; I am not positive how many. She did not keep right side up more than two minutes when a sea rolled us over again. We got on again and were washed off two or three times before I struck out for the shore. I asked Mayo to strike with me, as I knew him to be an excellent swimmer; but he said that we could not hold out to reach the shore and he would stay by the boat. Keeper Atkins was holding by the boat.

"Kelley had already struck out. I heard Taylor groan near me as I started, but did not see him.

"I saw a gap in the beach which must have been Clara Bell Hollow, two miles from Station No. 7. When about three seas from the shore my sight began to fail and soon I could see nothing; but I kept swimming.

"I recollect Surfman Cole saying, 'For God's sake, Isaiah, is this you?' and of his taking me up. I knew nothing more until I found myself in the station, after being resuscitated. I should think that I remained by the boat half an hour before I struck out. The cork belt was all that enabled me to reach the shore. The cork belts in the boat are a good thing and should be kept on."

Thus Keeper Atkins died with his boots on, as he said he would die if necessary, in the performance of his duty.

SYSTEM FOR FILLING SILO

HOW TO CUT AND PACK THE SILAGE—CO-OPERATION PAYS.

By C. H. Eckles, Professor of Dairy Husbandry, College of Agriculture, University of Missouri.

When corn is used for silage the entire plant, including the ear, is cut into to about one-half inch lengths, using a large power cutter for the purpose. A large cutter which permits filling the silo rapidly is most economical of labor. It is advisable for three or four farmers located close together to buy a silage cutter together. By helping each other they are able to fill the silos for the group with the minimum expense.

The cutters used to fill a medium sized silo have a capacity of from 10 to 15 tons per hour. From four to six teams are required to haul the corn from the field, depending on the distance and other conditions. The corn may be cut in the field with a corn binder, if one is at hand, or may be cut by hand and thrown into piles.

The cost of filling a silo has been found to vary from fifty cents to one dollar a ton, depending on the machinery used, the yield of corn per acre, the distance hauled, and how the work is organized and handled. With good organization and machinery the cost should not be more than seventy cents per ton.

The silage settles about eight feet in a silo thirty feet high and for this reason, where rapid filling is practiced, the silo will not be full after it has settled unless it is filled a second time. If it is convenient, allow the machine to stand two or three days for the silage to settle, then refill and most of the capacity will be made use of.

Where no special form of distributor is used in the silo, there is a tendency for the heavier pieces of ears to drop in one place while the leaves and stalks are thrown a greater distance. In order to keep the silage of a uniform composition the portion richer in grain should be distributed over the surface of the silo as the filling progresses.

It is especially important to make sure that the silage is packed closely around the walls since this is where the air gets in and the spoiling takes place. The wall must be smooth to make as little friction as possible in settling. While the silo is being filled, one man at least and preferably two, should work in the silo, distributing the silage and packing it. The outside next to the wall should be kept higher than the center and constantly tramped. There is no necessity for tramping in the middle, as it will take care of itself.

When the filling is completed the top should be leveled off and tramped down as thoroughly as possible over the entire surface. The upper layer should be thoroughly wet with water in some way. This can be done by running the water into the blower as the last few tons are run in, or by putting it into the silo after the filling is completed. The idea is to form an air tight layer over the top to prevent the silage from spoiling.

Some advocate the use of cut straw thoroughly wet on top of the silage. It has also been suggested that after the silage is thoroughly wet down, oats be sown on the top. These will sprout soon and assist in sealing the silo more quickly.

The ultimate success of most of the great manufacturing industries has depended on saving of waste. The business experts today are developing their time to stopping leaks. The time is within the memory of living men when bran was dumped into the Mississippi river. Do we throw it away now? Products of iron smelting, odds and ends from the packing house, and a hundred other incidental products are now being carefully turned to profit. Even sawdust, which once was burned, is distilled to charcoal, alcohol, creosote and turpentine.

Years ago the farmer burned over his woodland every year as a matter of course, to make the grass grow better. But now he knows better. It was too expensive.

Somewhere in every part of the country, this harvest time, a strawpile will be burned. If it had not been for the extreme shortage of feed last winter there would have been many a windrow of cornstalks burned before the spring plowing. And possibly—although it takes a stretch of the imagination—some farmer may haul out some manure and dump it in the ravine as they used to do.

These things are out of date. The time will come when all farmers shall realize that their profits depend on saving and getting benefit from these materials which have been, for so long, wasted.

It isn't that the farmer doesn't know better than to use harness that is continually failing to pieces, but that he forgets, in the rush of work, to fix it before it makes trouble. Extra buckles and snaps and hame staples are cheap, and time is expensive, in harvest.

How many farmers each year go to the fence corner to hitch up to the mower or binder, or the cultivator? Outdoor sleeping porches are advocated as an aid to health in humans, but it has never been proved that implements are the better for standing out in all kinds of weather.

Cleanliness and cold are the great factors in keeping milk and cream good during hot weather.

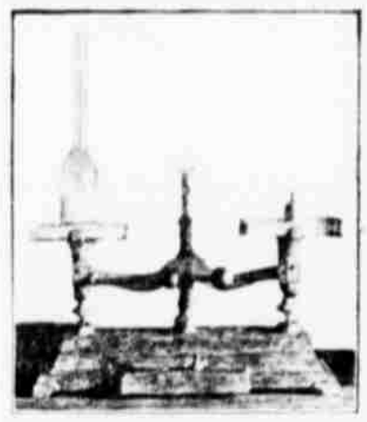
ACCURACY IN CREAM TEST

SAMPLE FOR BABCOCK TEST SHOULD BE WEIGHED.

By A. C. Page, College of Agriculture University of Missouri.

A mistake that is sometimes made in testing cream for the per cent of butter fat is in measuring the sample with a pipette instead of weighing it out on a balance.

Cream is lighter than milk, and if



An accurate butter fat test of cream requires that the sample of 18 grams be weighed into the test bottle instead of measured with 17.6 cc pipette. Balances like these are inexpensive and satisfactory.

the milk test pipette which holds 17.6 cubic centimeters is used for cream there will be less weight of cream than there should be for the test. Furthermore, a good deal of the cream may stick to the pipette, lowering the test still more. If this method is used at the creamery, the farmer is the loser, because the cream will appear to have less butter fat than it really has.

The proper method is to weigh out, on a small balance like the inexpensive one shown in the illustration, 18 grams of the cream (or nine grams if the cream is very rich), which is the proper weight to give accurately the per cent of fat. If nine grams is taken, the result must be multiplied by two to get the correct per cent.

This difference will materially affect the income from cream selling.

LONG USEFULNESS COMES FROM GOOD CARE.

By A. C. Page, College of Agriculture, University of Missouri.

Machinery that wears out and breaks down is expensive. Cows that are good for only a year or two are not likely to be profitable. The farmer is sometimes deceived in a cow because she starts the year with a large flow of milk, but after a few months she drops down to so small an amount that she scarcely pays for her keep. At the end of six months she may be dried up. The kind of cow that makes the money is the one that works the year round except for a month or six weeks at the end.

The cow at the Missouri College of Agriculture that has started in her tenth milking period and is still giving a large flow of milk is not exceptional in the ranks of good cows. Several others in the herd are doing even better than that. Such results, however, always accompany good care, and need not be expected where it is not given.

One of the reasons a cow needs a balanced ration is so that her body will be kept in the best condition to endure the hard work of giving milk. That is the meaning of a balanced ration for any animal—one that supplies the necessary elements for the work of milk production and also for the maintenance of the body in the best condition.

No cow that has wintered through on corn stalks and miscellaneous pickings is in condition for a big year's work. Neither is she in condition to live a long and profitable life.

Such results as have been obtained from this cow, shown in the illustration, could not be expected from a well bred dairy cow with good blood behind her. In the nine periods she has been in milk, she has produced 87,857 pounds of milk and 4,682 pounds of butter.

An extra profit can be gathered in from the corn field by drilling cowpeas in the corn at the last cultivation, turning off with sheep or hogs when it has made a good growth. The sheep will work in the undergrowth and pick off the lower blades of the corn without injuring the main crop. This plan is advocated by the College of Agriculture of the University of Missouri and has been successfully used by many farmers over the state. Some precautions are necessary at the first to prevent bloating of the sheep.

It is past seed corn time, but another time will come before long. It is time now to see those vacant spots where no corn seemed to come. Those spots are an argument for better seed next year. The time to get interested in better seed is when the crop begins to get ripe the year previous.

Someone has told us that the best time to prune fruit trees is when your knife is sharp, but judgment must be used.

One point in favor of the hollow brick silo is that it will not shrink and fall to pieces when the hot, dry days come at a time when it is empty.